'minority' is pending before the Supreme Court of India and this aspect may be kept in view while taking and action in the matter. The National Commission for Minorities was advised accordingly.

National Commission for Old People

*120. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering declaration of the National policy on old people in this International Year of the Old;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether setting up of a National Commission for old people is also being considered; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. A National Policy for Older Person is under consideration of the Government. The policy will seek to ensure the well being of older persons by attending to their financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other development needs. However the setting up of a National Commission for old people is not under consideration of the Government.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Export of Food Items

776. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI:
SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number and quantity of food items exported during the last three years, item-wise separately; and

(b) the effect on the availability and price front in internal market?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) A Statement is ANNEXED [*See* Appendix 185, Annexure No. 21]

(b) The policy of the Government to permit exports of food products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of food products is an on-going process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary with a view to making food exports increasingly viable.

Vegetable Shipments from India

777. SHRI E. BALANANDAN:
SHRI C. O. POULOSE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that export of onions make up 90 per cent of India's vegetable shipments and bring in over Rs. 300 crores annually;

(b) the total production of onion during last three years till August, 1998;

(c) the demand and supply of onion in the country in the last three years; and

(d) the amount and earnings from the exports during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. During 1997-98, exports of onion accounted for about 52 percent of vegetables exported from India in value terms.

(b) & (c) The total production of onion in India during the years 1995-96, 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 is as under:

Qty.: Million tonnes

Year	Production
1995-96	4.08 (estimated)
1996-97	4.43 (estimated)